LORD CHAITANYA BIDS FAREWELL TO THE BENGAL DEVOTEES

from *Sri Chaitanya-Charitamrita, Madhya-lila* Chapter 15

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CAST: Lord Chaitanya, Satyaraja Khan, Vasudeva Datta, Various Devotees.

(Lord Chaitanya and his devotees explode upon the stage and the *kirtan* builds up to an ecstatic climax and then ends. Lord Chaitanya sits surrounded by the devotees and speaks movingly:)

Lord Chaitanya: My dear devotees, to see all of you before Me is the pleasure of My life, so how can My heart bear it now that all of you must return to Bengal? Please return here every year to see Me. Advaita Acharya, I consider you to be My spiritual master. Please give love of Krishna to all, even the lowest of men. And My dear Nityananda, you should spread devotional service throughout Bengal. Take with you Ramadas and Gadadhara, and sometimes I will also come to see your dancing, which purifies the three worlds.

O Srivasa, when you perform *sankirtan* in your house, know for certain that I am present there. Please take *prasada* from Lord Jagannath to my mother...

My dear Raghava Pandit. I am obliged to you, due to your pure love for Me. Everyone please hear of the pure devotion of Raghava Pandit. Every day, he prepares the finest fruits with great care and attention, and offers them to the Deity along with cakes, sweet rice and all the finest foods and paraphernalia. Everyone is satisfied by his service...

All you inhabitants of Kulina-grama must come to Me every year and bring silken rope to carry Lord Jagannath.

Satyaraja Khan: O Lord, I am a materialistic man, entangled in household life. What is my duty?

Lord Chaitanya: Always chant the Holy Name of Krishna, and try to serve Him and His devotees, the Vaishnavas.

Satyaraja Khan: My Lord, how can one recognize a Vaishnava? What are his common symptoms?

Lord Chaitanya: Anyone who chants the Holy Name even once is considered to be worshipable, for by so doing all his previous sinful activities are nullified. There are no barriers in this chanting, and anyone can worship the Lord in this way and become purified, even the lowest of men. This chanting awakens one's dormant love for Krishna.

Therefore anyone who is chanting the Holy Name of the Lord is understood to be a Vaishnava and worthy of one's worship.

Ah, Vasudeva Datta, what can I say about your pure love for Sri Govinda? Your love for Krishna is so strong that it can illuminate the darkness hearts of all the fallen souls. **(Vasudeva Datta becomes embarrassed and touches the Lord's lotus feet)**

Vasudeva Datta: My dear Lord, You appear just to deliver all the conditioned souls. As you are the Supreme independent Lord, I have one petition to make before You: O Lord, my heart breaks to see the sufferings of the entangled living entities, therefore I request you to transfer the *karma* of their sinful lives upon my head. O Lord, let me always remain in a hellish condition, but please let their sufferings finish. **(Sri Chaitanya is overwhelmed)**

Lord Chaitanya: Such a statement is not astonishing, for you are actually Prahlada Maharaja, and Krishna has bestowed all mercy upon you! Whatever you desire, Krishna will give, there is no need for you to suffer! My dear Vasudeva Datta, the purity of your love is unmatched, and because of that love all living beings in the universe will certainly be liberated!

Now, My dear devotees, you must return to Bengal, but do not think that I will be separated from you, for wherever the Holy Name of Sri Hari is chanted by His devotees, certainly I am present. Come now... take heart! Let there be *kirtan!* **(A very slow and ecstatic *kirtan* begins and all the devotees of Lord Chaitanya dance)**

The End